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1914

welcome advance. The Russian alliance had sprouted from a similar germ.

In the Balkan Wars, which started from October 1912 to August; 1913, it required all Grey's tact and authority as Chairman of the *committees* of the Ambassadors in London to prevent Austria and Russia flying at each other's throats. Not that either Power had the slightest desire for war. The venerable Francis Joseph, mindful of previous military disasters, was profoundly pacific, and Russia was well aware that she still needed several years to recover her strength. Great Powers, however, have to think of their prestige, and pride sets limits to surrender. The main object of the struggle, namely the destruction of Turkish rule in the Balkans, was accomplished in the first month by the Allies, but the completeness of their victory complicated the division of the spoils. Russia's chief aim was to enlarge the territory of Servia, while Austria, apprehensive of Pan-Serb ambitions, strove to keep her away from the Adriatic. Thus the most difficult problem was the delimitation of the little state of Albania called into existence under the rule of Prince Wilhelm of Wied. For weeks the peace of Europe hung upon the fate of Djakova, a small Albanian market town, which Austria claimed for Albania and Russia for Servia. Austria finally gave way by order of Francis Joseph himself, and indeed throughout the long-drawn Balkan crisis she played an unexpectedly passive part. When the victorious Allies finally quarrelled and Bulgaria was easily crushed by Servia and Greece, Austria's prestige received a fresh blow. Now that European Turkey had been carved up, the familiar talk of the approaching partition of the Hapsburg Empire was openly renewed.

The first year of peace witnessed a series of secondary crises which revealed the alarming fragility of the European structure. An Austrian ultimatum in the autumn of 1913 compelled Servia to withdraw her troops from Albania, but added new fuel to the animosity of Belgrad. The appointment of a German General, Liman von Sanders, to the command of the First Turkish Army Corps at Constantinople provoked fury in Russia, who had plans of her own for the control of the Straits; and the compromise by which he exchanged his command in the capital for the supervision of the whole army failed to soothe Russian opinion. For the increase of German influence on the Bosphorus was an undeniable fact, and the prospective